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AUTHOR Patterson, Patricia; Starcher, Sherolyn
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ABSTRACT

The STRIVE Program, an approach to identifying and serving culturally diverse (Black and Hispanic) gifted students, is described. The STRIVE model consists of six modules: gifted programing; receptive and expressive language training; counseling (individual and group); relevant curriculum providing transitory skills; a parent advisory board; and teacher inservice. Teacher workshops are central to the project's success and are designed to increase the teacher's self image as well as to provide specific teaching and curriculum information. Original project students were identified through the California Achievement Test, the Structure of the Intellect Learning Abilities Test, the Torrance Tests of Creative Thinking, the System of Multicultural Pluralistic Assessment, and the Piers-Harris Self Concept Inventory. (CL)

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Identification of and Curriculum Methodologies for Potentially Gifted Black Children

Patricia Patterson
Sherolyn Starcher
Coordinators of STRIVE Program

Paper Presented at the CEC Conference
on The Exceptional Black Child
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"One thing I can say about us is that our patience and our pride have made the whole universe stop, take notice, and come to realize that we're not just a race of people to drift off and to be extinct."

Jeboria Stuart, 1981

This statement made by a 13 year old black student gives us cause to stop and think about the student population which may be considered culturally diverse. Cultural diversity as used here refers to a condition of racial, ethnic, language, or physical difference from the dominant culture (Baldwin, 1978). Specifically, these students are American Blacks, Puerto Ricans, Mexican Americans, Asians, and American Indians.

There has been a tremendous lack of communication and understanding of this population especially the gifted individuals within it. This lack of understanding and communication has resulted in the delay of adequate development of identification processes and programs. It is our contention that primary goals for culturally diverse gifted students should not differ from those of gifted children of any population. What should differ is the delivery system to these groups or individuals.

The STRIVE Program is an ESEA Title IV-C, Educational Improvement Grant existing for the 1980-81

school year in Broward County, Florida. It was designed for culturally diverse students who appeared to be gifted but were unable to meet existing state guidelines for entrance into a gifted program. STRIVE takes into consideration that standardized tests fail to successfully measure the cognitive strengths of those students. STRIVE's main thrust is to provide those students with transitory skills so that they may enter state approved gifted programs and meet with success.

Within the scope of this program several specific problems were identified: 1) current intelligence tests do not identify culturally diverse gifted students; 2) teacher attitudes often interfere with the nomination of gifted students who are culturally diverse, especially if they were disruptive, apathetic, or underachieving; 3) irrelevant and unresponsive curriculum fails to take into consideration the learning styles of these students or their educational needs; 4) culturally diverse students often come into our educational system with deficits which prevent them from taking advantage of educational opportunities that are offered; 5) a disadvantaged environment operates on the bright child very much like emotional disturbances. Performances become inconsistent. This combines with student

attitudes, with the result being that teachers and counselors often are prevented from reaching out to them.

Identification and Selection

Culturally diverse students' test scores were obtained from the California Achievement Test given county wide by school guidance counselors in May of 1980. To be placed in the nomination pool a student had to score at or above the 80th percentile in Total Battery achievement. A review of the literature indicated that many potentially gifted students would be achieving at least at grade level. A pool of 48 children was created and 24 students were randomly selected for the program.

These 24 students were then administered the: 1) Structure of the Intellect Learning Abilities Test; 2) Torrance Tests of Creative Thinking; 3) SOMPA; and 4) Piers-Harris Self Concept Inventory.

(See Figure 1)

STRIVE Program Model

The program consists of six modules: 1) gifted programming; 2) receptive and expressive language

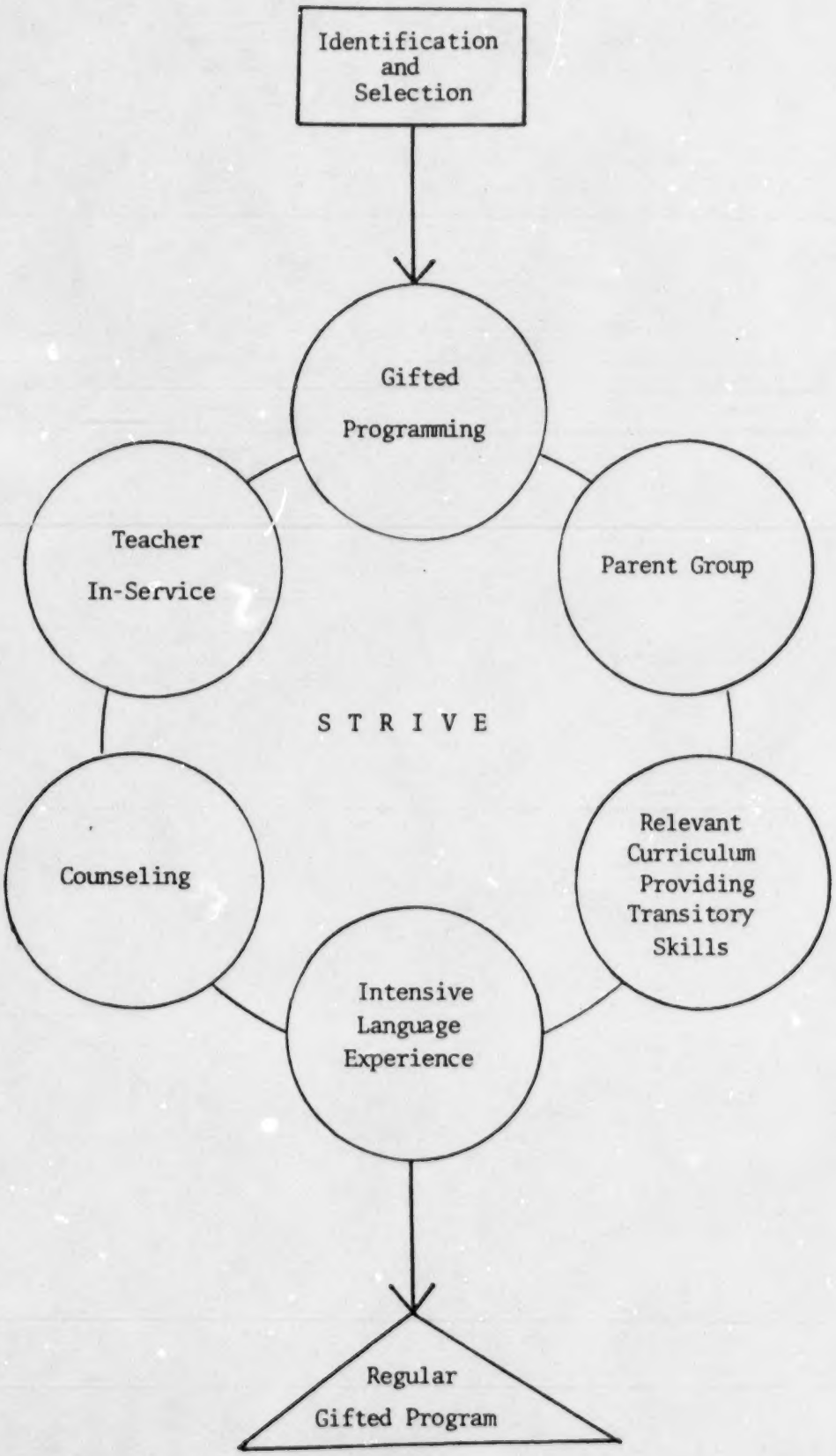
Identification and Selection
Gifted Programming
Teacher In-Service
Parent Group
S T R I V E
Counseling
Relevant Curriculum Providing Transitory Skills
Intensive Language Experience
Regular Gifted Program

Figure 1

training; 3) counseling; 4) relevant curriculum providing transitory skills; 5) a parent advisory board; and 6) teacher inservice.

(See Figure 2)

Students in the program are taught as if they had already been identified gifted. Units of study which had been field tested in a gifted program are used. Changes in the units were made for reasons of relevancy to culture. Guildford's five Structure of the Intellect operations comprise the core of each unit.

Receptive and expressive language training involves much verbal interaction. Boundary breakers, encounter groups, value clarification exercises and guidance activities involve a great deal of dialogue. Our goal here is not to teach formal dialect but to teach the students how to effectively communicate with teachers and peers.

The counseling module involves individual and group counseling, cultural exploration activities and those guidance activities mentioned in the language module. Guidance goals include: 1) the use of mentors; 2) assisting students in understanding the problems they face in searching for an identity; 3) help in recognizing behaviors which alienate people; 4) help in coping with peer pressure not to succeed; 5) help in

STRIVE Program
Identification and Selection

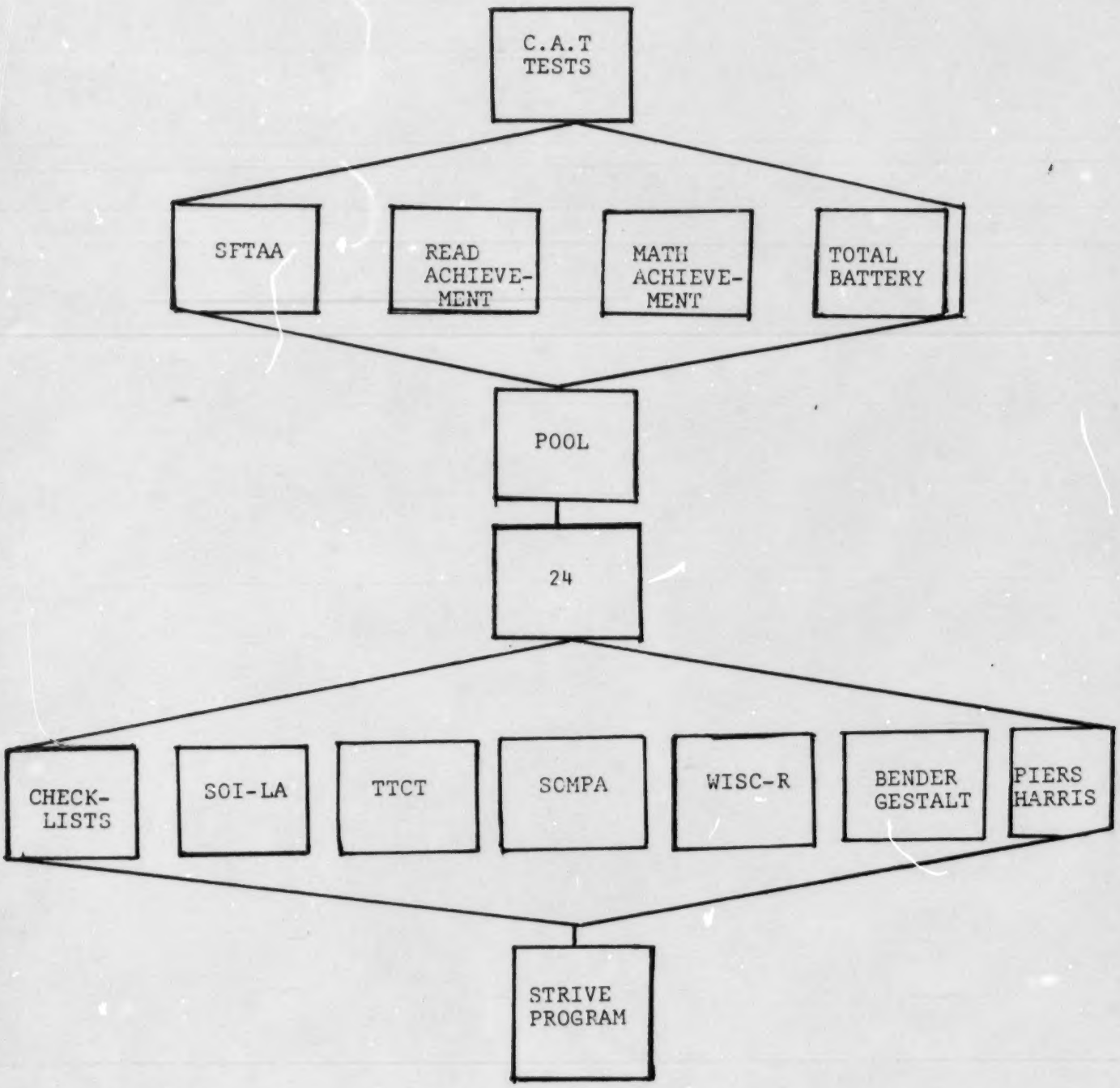

Figure 2

balancing their own identity with being part of the dominant culture; and 6) help in learning to be introspective. These six suggestions are taken from Dr. Mary Frasier, University of Georgia, Athens, GA.

Relevant curriculum and transitory skills are attended to on an individual basis. Since our students are black and hispanic, we try to use learning activities which address their needs and fit their background. Every attempt is made to fill learning gaps previously acquired by students however, the STRIVE Program is not a remedial one. If a student does not seem to be able to master one particular skill, we try to pair that weakness with a different strength in order to create a bridge to a higher level of learning.

Our parent advisory board meets one time a month to discuss program concerns and assist in curriculum development. The board's major goal is to help generate better cooperation between the home and school which affords parents an opportunity to directly contribute to their child's growth and learning potential.

Perhaps our most difficult task is in working with classroom teachers. Improving or changing teacher attitudes is very difficult. A great deal of time must be spent in informing teachers and building a trust

relationship with them. Our workshops are of two types, those designed to build the self image of the teacher and those that include information specifically addressing teaching strategies, curriculum, and information to promote awareness.

The STRIVE Program is a complex undertaking yet one we feel is built on sound educational research. We feel that the program is transportable to almost any area and requires no big expenditures other than salaries for a gifted teacher, a guidance counselor and a clerk.

We sum up the STRIVE Program with our formula:

$$KGC+CEE^2 \cdot PEP-(RRB)+TLC=HG^2C$$

Take knowledge of gifted children. Add a creative enriched environment twice over. Multiply that quantity times proven educational practices. Subtract repetition, routine and boredom. Add a teacher's love and caring. This should equal an educationally happy growing gifted child.

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